



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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OCTOBER 25, 2004
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OPERATION ICE STORM **13 DEFENDANTS INDICTED FOR METH DISTRIBUTION**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that Operation Ice Storm, a long-term investigation into the illegal distribution of large quantities of methamphetamine in southwest Missouri, has resulted in two indictments by a federal grand jury against 13 defendants.

The federal indictments were returned under seal by a federal grand jury in Springfield on Oct. 14, 2004. Those indictments were unsealed and made public today upon the arrest and initial court appearance of some of the defendants. Eight defendants were arrested today, Graves said, and two are currently incarcerated.

In addition to the conspiracy to distribute 15 kilograms or more of methamphetamine in Jasper County, Mo., Graves said, the indictments charge various defendants with other narcotics and firearms violations.

United States v. Yone Rodriguez, et al.

Yone Rodriguez, 36, and **Victor M. Gomez-Coronado**, 34, both citizens of Mexico; **Emmanuel Rodriguez**, 26, **Jeffrey S. Bateman**, 36, **Ronald D. Preston**, 34, **Marcus J. Glover**, 25, and **Amy C. Lawrence**, 19, all of Joplin, Mo.; **Roberto Rodriguez**, 29, **Jacquelyn M. Witt**, 20, and **Ricki J. Gomez**, 36, all of Carthage, Mo.; **Omar Rodriguez**, 22, of Reeds, Mo.; and **Roy Rodriguez**, 21, were all charged in a 29-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Springfield on Oct. 14, 2004.

Count One of the federal indictment alleges that all of the defendants were involved in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine in Jasper County and elsewhere from August 2002 to Sept. 20, 2004. According to the indictment, the amount of methamphetamine distributed or possessed with the intent to distribute by members of the conspiracy was 15 kilograms or more.

Yone Rodriguez and **Emmanuel Rodriguez** acted as organizers and leaders of the organization, the indictment alleges.

Each of the defendants was also charged with specific additional violations related to the alleged conspiracy.

Count Two of the federal indictment alleges that **Gomez-Coronado** was in possession of methamphetamine with the intent to distribute in Jasper County on Sept. 27, 2002. Counts Nine and Twenty-four of the federal indictment allege that **Gomez-Coronado** was in possession of methamphetamine in Jasper County on April 16, 2003, and Jan. 23, 2004, respectively. Count Twenty-five of the federal indictment alleges that **Gomez-Coronado**, an unlawful user of methamphetamine, was in possession of a Bulgarian 7.62 mm rifle in Jasper County on Jan. 23, 2004. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for anyone who is an unlawful user of a controlled substance to be in possession of a firearm.

Count Three of the federal indictment alleges that **Roberto Rodriguez** was in possession of methamphetamine with the intent to distribute in Jasper County on Jan. 30, 2003. Count Four of the federal indictment alleges that **Roberto Rodriguez** was in possession of cocaine with intent to distribute in Jasper County on Jan. 30, 2003.

Count Five of the federal indictment alleges that **Bateman** was in possession of methamphetamine with the intent to distribute in Jasper County on Feb. 6, 2003. Count Six of the federal indictment alleges that **Batemen** carried a .25-caliber Titan handgun during and in relation to the offense alleged in Count Five. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal to be in possession of a firearm in furtherance of any drug trafficking crime.

Count Seven of the federal indictment alleges that **Roy Rodriguez** was in possession of methamphetamine and marijuana in Jasper County on Feb. 12, 2003. Count Twenty-Two of the federal indictment alleges that **Roy Rodriguez** was in possession of methamphetamine in Jasper County on Jan. 14, 2004. Count Twenty-three of the federal indictment alleges that **Roy Rodriguez** was a felon in possession of a Titan .25-caliber pistol and ammunition on Jan. 14, 2004. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for anyone convicted of a felony to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Roy Rodriguez** has a 2003 criminal felony conviction for possession of a controlled substance in Jasper County.

Count Eight of the federal indictment alleges that **Lawrence** distributed in excess of five grams of methamphetamine in Jasper County on April 1, 2003. Count Ten of the federal indictment alleges that **Lawrence** distributed in excess of 50 grams of methamphetamine and in excess of five grams of pure methamphetamine in Jasper County on April 28, 2003.

Count Eleven of the federal indictment alleges that **Preston** distributed methamphetamine in Jasper County on May 13, 2003. Count Twelve of the federal indictment alleges that **Preston** was in possession of methamphetamine and marijuana in Jasper County on July 11, 2003.

Counts Thirteen, Fourteen and Twenty-six of the federal indictment allege that **Witt**

distributed methamphetamine in Jasper County on three separate occasions from Nov. 17, 2003, to Jan. 30, 2004.

Count Fifteen of the federal indictment alleges that **Omar Rodriguez** was in possession of methamphetamine in Jasper County on Dec. 16, 2003. Count Sixteen of the federal indictment alleges that **Omar Rodriguez**, an illegal alien, was in possession of a KEL TEC 9mm pistol on Dec. 16, 2003. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for anyone who is unlawfully in the United States to be in possession of any firearm.

Count Seventeen of the federal indictment is a forfeiture count, which would require **Emmanuel Rodriguez** to forfeit to the government any property derived from the proceeds of the conspiracy alleged in Count One or any property used to commit the alleged violation, including approximately \$3,000 seized from the defendant on Dec. 16, 2003; a 2000 Lincoln Navigator seized from the defendant on Dec. 16, 2003; and approximately \$5,352 seized from the defendant's residence on Dec. 19, 2003.

Counts Eighteen and Twenty-one of the federal indictment allege that **Glover** distributed in excess of five grams of methamphetamine in Jasper County on Dec. 16, 2003, and Jan. 9, 2004, respectively. Counts Nineteen and Twenty of the federal indictment allege that **Glover** distributed methamphetamine in Jasper County on Jan. 5, 2004, and Jan. 7, 2004, respectively.

Count Twenty-seven of the federal indictment alleges that **Gomez** was in possession of more than 50 grams of methamphetamine with the intent to distribute in Jasper County on June 6, 2004. Count Twenty-eight of the federal indictment is a forfeiture count, which would require **Gomez** to forfeit to the government any property derived from the proceeds of the violations alleged in Counts One and Twenty-seven, including \$9,559 seized from the defendant on June 6, 2004. Count Twenty-nine of the federal indictment alleges that **Gomez** was in possession of methamphetamine with the intent to distribute in Jasper County on Sept. 20, 2004.

United States v. Santa Belen De Necochea

Santa Belen De Necochea, 31, of Joplin, was charged in a three-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Springfield on Oct. 14, 2004.

Count One of the federal indictment alleges that **De Necochea** was in possession of methamphetamine with the intent to distribute in Jasper County on Feb. 14, 2004.

Count Two of the federal indictment alleges that **De Necochea** distributed methamphetamine in Jasper County on Aug. 15, 2004.

Count Three of the federal indictment alleges that **De Necochea** was in possession of five grams or more of methamphetamine with the intent to distribute in Jasper County on Aug. 16, 2004.

According to Graves, the following defendants were arrested today: **Marcus Glover**,

Jacquelyn Witt, Amy Lawrence, Ricki Gomez (all released on bond), **Emmanuel Rodriguez, Roberto Rodriguez, Jeffrey Bateman** and **Santa Belen De Nechochea** (all scheduled for detention hearings on Oct. 27, 2004).

Graves cautioned that the charges contained in the three indictments are simply accusations, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Robyn L. McKee. It was investigated by the Jasper County Drug Task Force; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement; the Drug Enforcement Administration; the Joplin, Mo., Police Department; the Carthage, Mo., Police Department; the Jasper County, Mo., Sheriff's Department; the Jasper County Metropolitan Police Department; the Carterville, Mo., Police Department; the Duquesne, Mo., Police Department; the Webb City, Mo., Police Department; the Newton County, Mo., Sheriff's Department; the Missouri State Highway Patrol; the Central Oklahoma Metro Interdiction Team (COMIT); the Kansas Bureau of Investigation and the Texas Department of Public Safety.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

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